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REPORT on Preschool Education

THE BI-WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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FTC PROPOSES VOLUNTARY AD CODE FOR CHILDREN'S TV Federal Trade Commission Chairman Lewis Engman this month proposed that government and industry should get together to work out a voluntary television code for advertising directed at children.

Speaking to the Young Lawyer's Section of the American Bar Association's 96th Annual Convention in Washington, Engman said, "If television deceives our children, if it frustrates them through false or misleading promises, if it promotes the sale of dangerous toys or other products, if it fosters dietary habits which endanger their health, . . . I think it will soon find itself circumscribed by legal restrictions and requirements." However, said Engman, there is still time for "voluntary concerted action" for a mutally acceptable solution.

Code Engman said such a code should cover:

** distortion of product performance through use of visual techniques;
** confusion over sale price and what that includes;
** advertisements which encourage the purchase of food items such as soft drinks and candy without explaining how they relate to a well-balanced diet;
** use of premiums and contests to create artifical demand for a product;
** encouraging children to ask parents to buy a product;
** use of program characters -- live or animated -- to sell to children;
** use of material which portrays children doing unsafe things.

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STUDY FINDS OMINOUS RESULTS FROM FAMILY DAY CARE Most of a handful of babies lost ground in their mental, physical and social development during the two years they were cared for in family day care settings, according to two North Carolina researchers. Dr. Minta M. Saunders, associate for program expansion of the United Day Care Services of Greensboro, and Dr. Mary Elizabeth Keister, director of the demonstration project of group care infants at the University of North Carolina, both at Greensboro, expressed dismay at the results they found, even with such a limited number of children, and urged that further research be done.

Seriousness Compounded by Federal Role The most threatening aspect of the findings, the authors said, is the ratio of money the Federal government is spending on family day care rather than center day care. "These findings raise some questions that deserve serious consideration, in view of the fact that 80 percent of Federal government spending for day care is for family day care."

Children Entered Family Care at Less Than 12 Months All of the children entered family day care at less than 12 months of age, and all underwent at least three complete assessments of their development during the following two years. "One must conclude from the data that many of the children in family day care were not realizing their potential for development ... One-third of the babies in the group performed at lower levels in their final tests of mental abilities, and 42 percent at considerably lower levels in their final tests of motor abilities than they had on first testing; and in the area of social development, half of the group of babies earned much lower social quotients at older ages than they had scored at younger age levels. Only three of the 12 children made gains in mental development quotients, only one child showed a substantial gain in motor development performance, and only two children made gains in scores on the test of social development. On each of the measures ... a large portion of the group showed neither gains nor losses. However, ... as the cut-off point for 'no change' was arbitrarily set at 10 quotient points, in actual fact, seven to nine quotient points may be considered a very large differential on an infant test. It is possible, then, that an even larger proportion of this group of babies were 'losers' in the realization of potential."

Day Care Mothers Had Had Some Training Another depressing aspect of the project, the authors said, was that the mothers giving care were not ignorant of the needs of growing babies. The university and the agency had sought women to take part in a family day care project; had helped those chosen to meet the state certification requirements for family day care; and had provided some 20 to 30 hours of training in child care, child development, and simple administrative tasks for a family day care operation. The agency also gave financial help where it was needed to build fences, buy toys and books for a library exchange, and gave some supervisory help.

Mothers Who Used System Paid for It "The family day care program was not subsidized," said the authors, at least not by the agencies involved directly in it. 'Rather, it had to sustain itself on the fees collected from parents and/or paid by the country department of social services.... The United Day Care Services program

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STUDY FINDS OMINOUS RESULTS FROM FAMILY DAY CARE (Cont.) may be viewed as a workable 'systems' model of what is possible in a typical urban community venturing to 'professionalize' the field of family day care."

Most of the Advantages Turned Out to be Myths The two authors reported that nearly all of the advantages cited by proponents of this type of day care turned out to be myths:

** Continuity of care proved to be a sham, with greater mobility of the children among different family care givers than in center care. "One child had to adjust to six different day care homes (and mothers); one child over a period of two months was in three different homes; seven other children averaged from one to five months with one caregiver."
** The opportunity to keep all the children from one family together also proved to be a sham. Since Federal restrictions on the number of children under certain ages who may be cared for include the children of the caregiving mother, the common result was that siblings were cared for in a variety of homes.
** Convenient location of family day care homes for the mothers who used them proved to be true, but only for low income mothers. Middle income mothers could not find nearby family day care for their children.
** Women offering family day care were supposed to enjoy the option of being able to stay at home and earn money. However, 25 of the 40 mothers terminated their work, for such reasons as illness, leaving the city for emergency, going to work in a day care center, and didn't like the work.
** Family day care homes were supposed to provide real family life for the children, but more than half the care giving mothers had no husband in the home.

Questions to be Answered "Is it possible that few infants will make gains in social, intellectual, and motor development in the 'usual' (or, in what was reported here, a better-than-average) monitored system of family day care?" asked the authors. "For a responsible agency to operate a family day care program, what more is required (than was invested by the agency here) to prepare women to offer infants and toddlers the kinds of daily experiences that enhance potential for development?" Finally, what are the real costs of family day care?

The report is entitled, "Family Day Care: Some Observations." It was sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission of the Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It is available from the Leasco Information Products, Inc., 4827 Rugby Ave., Bethesda, Md. 20014, as document ED 072 856 for 65 cents in microfiche or $3.29 in paperback.

D.C. FIRM WINS HEAD START IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT Development Associates, Inc., of Washington, D.C., has been awarded a $188,576 contract to improve the effectiveness of Head Start programs. The Office of Child Development wants the firm to gather information on the impact of performance standards issued early this year to regional and local programs, relating to education, health services, parent involvement and social services. Development Associates will spot check the more than 1,000 programs to see how they are complying with the standards, and if any of the standards need modifying.

CONSORTIUM BOARD TO WEIGH CONTRACTORS' IDEAS ON CDA Board members of the Child Development Associate Consortium, Inc., will have three complete systems to consider when they meet Sept. 6 and 7 to select ways to assess the skills of child development personnel. Staff members of the consortium are now selecting the components of the three systems from the proposals submitted by 19 contractors. The board may choose to field test all three systems, or to select only one or two. Whatever systems are chosen may very well lead to the certification of the first Child Development Associates by the end of fiscal year 1974.

Assessment Procedures Are Major Challenge How to assess the abilities of paraprofessionals already working in the field is a major hurdle on the way to establishing a national CDA credential issued by the consortium. A task force of consortium members spent a year considering which skills are necessary for a good child care worker before deciding on six in addition to a number of personality characteristics. The nineteen contractors have been devising ways to assess the six competencies, with an eye to awarding certification to people already skilled in the field who may be short on formal training. The long range object of credentialling is to assure a supply of competent personnel for an expanding field.

Field Testing at Volunteering Institutions Field testing of the three systems of assessment will be done in various types of child care setups, which volunteered their services. These include day care centers, Head Start programs, private nurseries, and training institutions. Presumably, the personnel at the volunteering institutions will be the first to receive CDA certification.

Each Contractor Sets Up Assessment of a Competency Most of the contractors set up an assessment procedure for one competency, although some worked on more than one. At New York University, Ed Ponder is the principal investigator on a grant of approximately $19,695 to see which tools, such as observation and logs, best identify the child educator's competence at setting up and maintaining a safe and healthy environment. At the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, Texas, Beth Kennedy supervised a $37,328 assessment of the child educator's ability to set up the center, coordinate the center's care with home care, and generally keep abreast of the needs of the child and the center. Bernard Banet at the High Scope Foundation in Ipsilanti, Mich., with a grant of approximately $40,203 set priorities on which skills best promote the mental and physical development of the child, and the best way to measure them.

Two Contractors Measure Same Competency Georgia State University's Joanne Nurss with a grant of $17,790 tried to pinpoint the competencies necessary to promote the child's self esteem, and find how to measure them. John Dill of the Day Care Council of New York City with a grant of $20,055 worked on the same problem from the angle of training the educator to develop the child's self esteem, and then measuring the efficiency of the training.

Relations Between Child and Adults Studied. Dr. Jim Savage of Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a grant of $13,997 worked on assessment of the child educator's competence as a promoter of good group relationships among children and adults in a day care setting, in accordance with basic ideas of the American Psychological Associates. At the Learning Institute in Washington, D.C., Gail Perry with a grant of $11,918 worked

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CONSORTIUM BOARD TO WEIGH CONTRACTORS' IDEAS ON CDA (Cont.) on the same competence, but with the idea of which verbal and non-verbal behaviors of the teacher seemed to promote good relations in a group of children and adults. With a grant of approximately $4,993, Alfredo Baldarrama of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, defined the needs of Spanish speaking children, and how to assess the ability of child educators to respond to those needs. At California State College in Dominguez Hills, Antonia Bercovici with a grant of $10,674 compiled a catalog of what teachers actually do in the classroom with young children, and an inventory of instruments to evaluate what teachers do.

Two Grants for Total Assessment System Deanna Hanson of the University Elementary School at the University of California in Los Angeles with a grant of $16,657 studied which teacher competencies help children reach specific goals, while Ruth Benoliel of Yakima, Wash., Head Start with a grant of $15,257 compiled data to show the difficulty of trying to draw conclusions about the relationship between teacher actions and child behavior.

Three D.C. Contractors Work on Information System Rudy Wiggins of Lawrence Johnson & Associates, Washington, D.C., with a grant of $17,897 designed a system to include minority views in the establishment of CDA competencies, and Warren Greenleaf, also of Washington, D.C., designed a publicity program for the consortium, including an evaluation component to determine its effectiveness, with a grant of $6,626. With a grant of $10,182 Bill Franhuizen of Informatics, Inc., of Washington, D.C., developed a system for mailing and data storage and retrieval.

Contractors Work on Training Components At the University of Texas in Austin Peter Jennings with a grant of $24,851 outlined the knowledge needed by CDA's to achieve the competencies, and the measuring tools and training sequences needed. Leo Bonner of Bonner and Krantz in Madison, Wisc., with a grant of $13,075 defined what strategies a teacher should employ to develop language use in children. Stanley Crockett of Collaborative Change, Inc., in Oakland, Calif., with a grant of $9,028 pinned down the procedures to allow a CDA candidate to select a training program best suited to his needs. Diane Keel and Brenda Bryant of the Heritage Foundation, Inc., New Brunswick, N.J., with a grant of $14,202 proposed ways to measure the integration of home and center child care. Dr. Jean Carew Watts of Howard University, with Sara Lightfoot, on a $14,999 grant developed systems of determining if a child educator was discriminating against the children in his care on the basis of race, sex, creed or cultural background.

One Contractor Works on State Plan John Maurice of the Wisconsin Child Development Association in Madison with a grant of $7,107 developed a set of recommendations to change the certification of child development workers in Wisconsin.

About 25 consortium members and observers will attend the meeting at the CDA Consortium offices at 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 601E, in Bethesda, Md., beginning at noon Sept. 6.

MOORE'S FIRM GETS CONTRACT ON EARLY ADMISSION STUDY The Hewitt Research Center of Berrien Springs, Mich., which last year published a controversial study opposing earlier school admission for young children, has been awarded a $200,000 contract to study the same subject for the Office of Economic Opportunity. Raymond S. Moore and Dennis R. Moore were the co-authors of the study, "The California Report: Early Schooling for All?" A number of articles in reaction to the Moores' ideas appeared in national magazines.

Only Severely Handicapped Need Early Institutions The only very young children who need institutional help are the severely handicapped, say the Moores. Normal young children are better off staying at home, because:

** Formal programs often overlook the development of seeing, hearing, and neuropsychological competence, in their eagerness to stress cognitive learning.
** Many programs have had poor results compared to children who had no formal schooling.
** Published costs of these programs may be very wide of the mark.

The authors challenged the idea that low income parents necessarily give poor care to their children, and finally presented summaries of a number of studies which support the thesis of delaying formal schooling as late as possible, sometimes even until the child is 9 or 10 years old.

Project Will Have Three Purposes The project commissioned by OEO will have three purposes -- to review major research in the field, to interpret the data compiled in a 1970 national survey of elementary schools, and to study existing and proposed laws on school admission.

Top Names in Field Are Consultants Top consultants for Hewitt in the review and evaluation of major research include Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner, Dr. Earl Schaffer, Dr. Bettye Caldwell, Dr. Robert Hess and Dr. John Bowlby. Dr. Robert Ebel, president of the American Education Research Association, will be the major investigator of data in the elementary survey, and Dr. Michael Kirst of Stanford University and August Steinhelber of the National School Board Association will study laws on early admission. The project will take two years.

OE TO COMBINE BUT NOT ABOLISH HANDICAPPED PANELS The Office of Education has changed its mind about abolishing the national advisory committees for the education of the deaf and for handicapped children. Commissioner of Education John Ottina proposed in his annual report this year to abolish both and create a national advisory council on the handicapped to cover both fields. Instead, however, OE will simply combine the two advisory councils.

DISTRICT PICKS NEW SUPERINTENDENT The District of Columbia school board has chosen Barbara A. Sizemore to be the new superintendent of the city's schools. Mrs. Sizemore, who this fall will become the only black woman currently heading a major city school system, ran the schools for The Woodlawn Organization in Chicago and has been employed more recently by the AASA in Washington. She said she hopes to decentralize the District schools with an eye toward greater community involvement in education.

SMALL STUDY SHOWS TEEN PARENTS IGNORANT, VIOLENT Teenage parents studied by a Pennsylvania State University professor not only expected too much too soon from their infant children,they also slapped, shook, and otherwise abused them for failing to meet these unrealistic expectations. Professor Vladimir de Lissovoy studied 48 couples with an average IQ just above 100 in a semi-rural area in central Pennsylvania, and concluded that their ignorance of child development was just one part of a larger pattern of unsuitable behavior: "In general, I found the young parents in this study to be, with a few notable exceptions, an intolerant group - impatient, insensitive, irritable and prone to use physical punishment with their children."

Expect Toilet Training at 24 Weeks The parents, many of them high school dropouts, were questioned on what age they believed children should be able to do certain things. The fathers, whose own ages averaged 17, thought babies could be toilet trained for bowel and urine control at 24 weeks; should be able to sit alone at 6 weeks; speak their first word at 24 weeks; and recognize wrongdoing at 40 weeks. The mothers, whose ages averaged 16 1/2, were slightly more realistic, thinking that bowel training would be possible at 26 weeks; that the baby should be able to sit alone at 12 weeks; speak the first word at 32 weeks; and recognize wrong at 52 weeks.

Unmarried Seniors Just As Ignorant The same questions put to a group of unmarried seniors in a rural high school brought almost identical answers, said Professor de Lissovoy.

Mothers Studied Don't Cuddle Babies "Only five mothers . . . expressed enjoyment of their children in the sense that they spontaneously cuddled or played with them just for the sheer joy of it. It was also surprising to learn that in this primarily rural area only three mothers had attempted to breast feed their children."

Physical Punishment Common Many of the parents told how they spanked their babies for "misdeeds." In later visits, in response to questions about discipline of crawling babies, all of the mothers indicated they used physical punishment to control their children. Since nearly all of the teenage parents in the study had younger brothers or sisters for whom they sometimes had to baby sit, Professor de Lissovoy figured they didn't benefit from these experiences.

Doctors Weren't Much Help, Either "Neither was much help offered by their physicians. What advice was given usually came in the form of mimeographed directions indicating formulas for feeding, the times to introduce certain foods and food supplements, and the schedules for future visits to the physician," said de Lissovoy.

Realistic Help Needed for Effective Parenthood "Obviously, a realistic approach to helping young people become effective parents is necessary," he said, citing the Office of Education's program of education for parenthood, and the work of the Consortium on Early Childbearing and Childrearing of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. These teenage parents also need the services of public agencies to help them resolve the personal, social and economic frustrations which they are taking out on their children, he said. "It is my conclusion that the children of many adolescent marriages have a high risk of joining the number of battered and abused babies; any measures to help prevent this deserve serious consideration." Professor de Lissovoy described his research in the July-August edition of Children Today, the publication of the Office of Child Development/Children's Bureau. For statistical information write to him at the College of Human Development, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. 16802.

EXTRACTS FROM PRIVATE SCHOOL DESEGREGATION DECISION A recent decision handed down by a U.S. District Judge in Alexandria, Virginia, affects the segregation policies of nearly 400 private, all-white schools and is considered a sure bet to reach the Supreme Court.

The suit and the ruling by Judge Albert Bryan, Jr., are based not on any principle of equal educational opportunity, but purely on the right of nonwhites to make contracts on the same basis as whites. The original suit was filed by the parents of Colin Gonzales and Michael McCrary against the Fairfax-Brewster School and Bobbe's School. Colin and Michael are both black, and their parents contended that officials at each school had refused to consider the children for admission solely because of their race. Although the schools denied ever having said such a thing, the 395-member Southern Independent School Association, which intervened as a defendant, grasped the nettle and argued that their racially exclusive policies were both justified and constitutional.

Not Truly Private "Although both schools claim to have strictly established criteria for enrollment, the end result of their admissions policies as applied to both Colin and Michael evidences no 'plan or purpose of exclusiveness' for selection of students 'other than race' (quoting Supreme Court language). This disposes of the argument that these were 'truly private' schools since the opportunity to attend these schools was open to every white child.

KIDS REJOICE AS CHOCOLATE MILK GETS OFFICIAL OKAY School food programs can now offer children chocolate milk, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced yesterday. New regulations, effective immediately, permit the use of lowfat, skim or cultured buttermilk, and flavored as well as unflavored whole milk.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service first announced its intention to make the change in regulations on June 1. Of 512 comments received since then from interested persons, more than 500 thought it was a good idea. FNS officials said Friday they weren't sure how many of the favorable comments came from kids.

STUDENTS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY KNOW, SAYS RESEARCHER How realistic are school children about what they know? Not very, according to David McMullen, an Assistant Professor of Education at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. McMullen tested a group of junior high school students this past spring to determine how well they were able to assess their own knowledge and ability. "Almost invariably the test group was overconfident in assessing what they knew," he concluded.

Using 51 seventh grade mathematics students from Gelinas Junior High School in Stony Brook as test subjects, Dr. McMullen measured responses to a series of mathematics questions taken from standardized tests. Rather than measuring only the percentage of correct answers, Dr. McMullen used a specially designed testing format to find out how well students could predict the value of information they received.

Out of the 51 students, 14 were judged to be realistic in assessing their own knowledge prior to the experiment, with the number moving up to 18 out of 51 after the project had been completed. However, the vast majority of those judged unrealistic were overconfident rather than underconfident about their own abilities, McMullen found.